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FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY.

LETTER

TO

GEORGE SMITH, ESQ., LL.D. C.I.E.,

Foreign Mission Secretary of the Free Church of Scotland,

ON

THE FREE CHURCH MISSIONARY COLLEGES

IN

INDIA.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
JANUARY 1, 1900

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th inst. and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours truly,
[Signature]

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LETTER TO DR. GEORGE SMITH, C. I. E., *Foreign Mission*
Secretary of the Free Church of Scotland, ON THE FREE
CHURCH MISSIONARY COLLEGES IN INDIA.

DEAR SIR,

It is with great diffidence and after very long delay that I venture to send you the following remarks. Adverse criticism is an ungracious, often a fruitless, task. As an outsider, I may come under the condemnation of a homely Indian proverb, "Putting one's ladle into other people's pots." Lastly, and chiefly, this may be regarded as simply an attempt to advertise the wares of the Society with which I am connected.

On the other hand, for thirty-four years I have observed, more or less, the educational Missions of the Free Church in India. I am one of the few remaining men who knew John Anderson of Madras, and listened to his fervid appeals. Alexander Duff, David Ewart, and John Wilson, were personal friends, with whom I had many conversations. For quarter of a century I have visited nearly every year the three Presidencies, and thus had opportunities for gaining information regarding the Mission Colleges. Although belonging to the United Presbyterian Church, I have for several years been a member of the Madras Free Church Congregation. I am now in my seventieth year. It must soon be said of me, as of the friends whose names I have mentioned, *abiit ad plures*. Before I depart, I wish to unburden my mind on what I have long felt very deeply.

The present seems a favourable time for bringing forward any proposals. For years there has been some dissatisfaction, both at home and in India, with regard to the results of Missionary Colleges. The late affair at Madras has, no doubt, increased the feeling. I believe Professor Lindsay is about to visit the Missions as a Deputation. It occurred to me that I might venture to call his attention to one or two points which he might discuss with Missionaries during his visit. The opposing influences are so strong that I have not much hope of success; but it seems a duty to bring them forward, whatever may be the result.

Remarks will be confined to one or two points; the entire subject would require a volume.

Preliminary Acknowledgment.—It may be stated at the outset that the withdrawal of the Free Church from the higher education in India is strongly deprecated. India owes a vast debt of gratitude to Scotland. The advent of Alexander Duff was a new era in her history, powerfully affecting her for good in many respects. It would be a great calamity if the higher education fell entirely into the hands of Government, Jesuits and Hindus. All that is urged is, that it should be made, if possible, more evangelistic in its character.

As an old man, I am inclined to be a *laudator temporis acti*; but I acknowledge the very different conditions under which Missionary education is now carried on. Formerly, a Missionary might teach anything he liked: now there are competing Colleges, with University Examinations, regarding which students are nervously anxious. Every thing is done under high pressure. There is a spirit of false patriotism abroad among the Hindus, leading them to defend everything national. Infidel literature is another opposing influence, far stronger than before. For all these, allowance must be made.

Before coming to the proposals, some introductory remarks may be offered.

Main Object of the Colleges.—The late Dr. Ewart, speaking of "the special aim of English Missionary education," said: "This is and always ought to be, the evangelization of the pupils. We repudiate any other system than that which makes the conversion of sinners to God the chief end, and all the other machinery of the school subordinate to this."*

Of course there are other objects to be attained, but the foregoing is the principal.

Means to be adapted to the end in view.—This seems such a truism as not requiring to be stated; but its neglect is one of the chief defects of missionary education in India. The following remarks bear mainly on this point.

"Machinery" of Missionary Education.—The two great divisions are *Men* and *Books*. The former are much the more important. There is no doubt that Mission Committees send out the best candidates that present themselves. The greatest want, *everywhere*, is men "endued with power from on high." The home churches need a baptism of fire, and then their messengers will be filled with the same spirit. It would also be an advantage, if instead of sending out young men direct from college, they worked for a year under a minister at home noted for his evangelistic spirit.

Remarks will be confined to the second division.

TEXT-BOOKS.

These consist of two classes—for *Schools* and *Colleges*. The Colleges have large Schools attached to them. In 1887, the one connected with the Madras Christian College had 1060 names on the rolls. They form therefore an important part of the work.

READERS FOR SCHOOLS.

Remarks under this head refer simply to English *Readers*. Books on Grammar, Geography, &c., are not included. To avoid any possible mistake, it is mentioned that, so far as I am aware, the Bible is taught in all the Free Church Schools in India.

The objection has been urged, "If the Scriptures do not convert the children, Christian 'Readers' will not." Similarly it might be said, "If the Scriptures do not convert the people, tracts will not." But most missionaries, instead of refusing to circulate tracts because they think them of less value, circulate both.

Importance of School Books.—Dr. Duff says in his "Missionary Addresses :—"

"'Give me,' says one, 'the songs of a country, and I will let any one else make the laws of it.' 'Give me,' says another, 'the school books of a country, and I will let any one else make both its songs and its laws!'"

Similar views were held by the late Rev. J. Anderson, of Madras. The *Native Herald* says :

"And next to the inculcation of the Word of God itself by the living voice of the Teacher or Preacher, either upon adults or the rising generation that flock for instruction to schools, would we place the Christian School book as an instrument for good, whether printed in the vernacular languages, in English or in both." October, 1841.

Mr. Anderson, in his "Prospectus," issued before the establishment of the Madras Missionary Institution, says :

"The object is simply to convey through the channel of a good education as great an amount of truth as possible to the Native mind. Every branch of knowledge communicated is to be made subservient to this desirable end."*

It will be seen that Mr. Anderson valued "Christian School books," in addition to the "Word of God." Dr. Duff and others devoted a good deal of time to their preparation.

It is not desirable that Christianity should be dragged in where it would be out of place, as in a lesson on arithmetic or grammar. On the other hand, religion should not be confined to the small

* *True-Yoke-Fellows*, p. 64.

portion of the day in which the Bible is studied. "Readers" afford excellent opportunities of occasionally conveying most important truth, in a manner suited to the circumstances of the pupils.

It has been remarked, "*Whatever you would put into the life of a nation, put into its schools.*" The most effectual mode of accomplishing this is to put it into the *School Books*. They are read by the children when the memory is quick and retentive. Impressions are then produced which remain through life.

An intelligent teacher, if compelled to use inferior class books, will make up largely for their deficiencies by oral instruction. In India, however, except in a few superior schools, as has been well observed, "the book is every thing, for the master cannot supply what it fails to give."

But even in the case of the best teachers, it is a great advantage to have good text-books. Oral instruction must be limited, and if the pupils can *read* as well as *hear*, the lessons will be doubly impressed upon the mind.

Need of Adaptation.—When Lord Northbrook and Sir George Campbell, intelligent, thoughtful men, visited certain Schools in India, few things struck them more forcibly than the want of adaptation in the text-books to the country. Teachers from Scotland introduced the text-books used at home, apparently without considering that books suitable for Christian children in the North Temperate Zone, were not adapted for the use of Hindu children in the Torrid Zone. As well might a farmer sow the same seed on the burning plains of the Carnatic as within sight of the Grampians.

There are three great objections to the use of Home Books in this country:

1. *They are not intellectually adapted to India.*—While lessons on such subjects as the Robin-redbreast, Crossing Sweepers, &c., are very appropriate for children in Britain, it is manifest that they are not suited to beginners in this country.

The Report of the Education Commission has the following remarks on the use of such books in this India:—

"Adapted or unadapted, the books that are most suitable, because conveying the most familiar ideas, to English children, are most unsuitable to natives of India. Though often compelled to read about such things, the Indian learner knows nothing of hedge-rows, birds-nesting, hay-making, being naughty, and standing in a corner." p. 346.

Advanced students should be made to understand such allusions, but they are out of place in elementary School books.

But there are more serious objections to their use.

2. *Home Readers are not fitted to counteract the social and moral evils under which India groans.*—The tendency to run into

debt, neglect of female education, early marriages, the cruel treatment of widows, caste, &c., are crying evils, not one of which is alluded to in books published in England; but which can be exposed in books prepared specially for India.

3. *Home Readers are not adapted in a religious point of view.*—With a *missionary*, this ought to be by far the most important consideration. Home “Readers” are becoming more and more secular; but even the best of them in the above respect are intended for the instruction of Christian children in a Christian country. Here we have foul idolatry staring us on every side, and the most blasphemous religious errors current among the people. An Indian youth might read an English series of books from beginning to end, and never meet with a single appeal *specially addressed to his conscience as a Hindu*.

The Rev. J. Braidwood, formerly of the Madras Free Church Mission, told me that Messrs. Nelson had sent out specimens of their Reading Books; but he had not introduced them, because he did not consider them adapted to a *Missionary Institution in India*. A little examination will show that this decision was correct.

It should be stated at the outset that the Readers of Messrs. Nelson are beautifully got up; the tone throughout is excellent; and they are admirably suited for use *at home*. The remarks apply only to India.

Messrs. Nelson have issued several series of Readers; but so far as I am aware, it is the “Royal Readers” that are used in India.

The *First Reader* has at the end the well-known short prayer for children, and two or three others of a similar character:

This night when I lie down to sleep.

The name of Christ does not occur, I think, in the *Second* and *Third Readers*: the *Fourth Reader* has the beautiful story of the “Sheltering Rock.” The pupil must go over 500 pages before he comes to the name of the Saviour.

It may be objected that the “Royal Readers” have been introduced because they are the best for teaching English. It will be seen that this is disputed by the Education Commission. At all events, they are not the best adapted to promote the conversion of the children or Indian social reform.

At the commencement I stated that my motive in writing might be misconstrued. This is chiefly because the Christian Vernacular Education Society has published two series of English Readers, expressly intended for Mission Schools in India. Specimens were submitted to several leading Educationists and Missionaries, and their opinions of them obtained. It will be sufficient here to quote your own testimony and give the names of the others:

“I have carefully inspected the two series of English Reading Books of

the Christian Vernacular Education Society of India, for use in Schools in that country. The books interest me from an educational point of view, seeing that I was Principal of the Doveton College, Calcutta, with its two School Departments; on the literary side, from my experience as Editor of the *Friend of India*; and in their Christian and Missionary aspect.

"Educationally the Readers stand at the highest level of the best series of such books in this country, while by the allusions and illustrations they are specially suited for young people in India and the East. The six sets are well graduated up to the stage of preparation for the University Entrance Examination. The educational apparatus of explanations, spellings, etymology, pronunciation, &c., is full and satisfactory. The printing and binding of the books leave little to be desired.

"The lessons, both compiled and original, while chosen and written for an educational purpose, present examples of composition and style well fitted to mould the practice of the pupils. The passages have, in many cases, an important practical bearing on the social, and other reforms which India so much needs.

"Without sacrificing in any way the main educational object of such books, these Readers, from first to last, supply materials of a desirable kind for mission schools, and unobjectionable even in non-Christian schools and families which seek moral training. On this point the best Readers published in Great Britain and America are negative. Writing from a neutral platform, even the Indian Education Commission recommended the preparation of a Moral Text Book, but the Viceroy and the Secretary of State have not seen their way to adopt the suggestion. It becomes more important than ever that both Christian and Hindu schools which seek instruction in the principles and practice of morality and pure religion should use Dr. Murdoch's Readers.

"I desiderate only one thing in this Society's publications—the preparation of a book, or of editions of these books, specially suited to girls and women in the Zanas and Harems of the East."

The opinions expressed by the undermentioned are much of the same tenor :

ANGUS, Rev. Joseph, D. D., Author of *Handbook of the English Tongue*, &c.

CALDWELL, Right Rev. Bishop, Tinnevely.

CLARK, Rev. N. G., Secretary, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston.

CURRIE, James, Esq., LL. D., Principal, Church of Scotland Training College, Edinburgh, author of *Common School Education*, &c.

CURTIS, J. C., Esq., B.A., Principal, Normal College, Borough Road, London.

GILL, John, Esq., Church of England Normal College, Cheltenham, author of *School Management*.

GRAY, Rev. W., M.A., Secretary, Church Missionary Society, London.

LIDDELL, E., Esq., Principal, Homerton Training College, London.
 LOWRIE, Rev. J. C., D. D., Secretary, Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, New York.

MORRISON, Thomas Esq., LL. D., Rector, Free Church Training College, Glasgow, author of *Manual of School Management*.

MITCHELL, Rev. J. Murray, LL. D., formerly of Bombay.

NORTHBROOK, EARL OF, late Viceroy of India.

UNDERHILL, E. B., Esq., LL. D., formerly Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society.

So far as I am aware, the "Royal Readers" are used, either exclusively or largely, in the schools connected with the Free Church Colleges in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay.* The Free Church has been the great obstacle to the use of English Readers prepared for Mission Schools. From its Educational *prestige*, it has influenced some other Missions in the same direction.

Next to the Free Church Colleges, the Ritualistic party in the Church of England has been the hindrance to the use of Christian Readers. They are filled with holy horror at the idea that they, and, above all, the Bible, should be placed in the hands of the heathen. General Tremmenheere wrote a pamphlet in which the C. V. E. Readers are condemned on this account.

Some Missions have been induced to use Government books. Several of the books have been written by Government Inspectors, who naturally prefer them.

On the other hand, it is distinctly stated that most Missions, especially in certain Provinces, use Christian School Books. No Home Missionary Committee should infer, without direct evidence, that the remarks in this letter apply to the schools in which they are specially interested.

Granting that the C. V. E. S. Readers are unsatisfactory, why should not the large body of Free Church Missionaries in India, prepare a series of their own? The C. V. E. S. would probably be willing to publish a series approved by them, or they could make their own arrangements for their issue.

If may be objected that there are not teachers fit to be entrusted with Christian Readers. There should be much less difficulty now than in the days of Duff and Anderson.

COLLEGE TEXT-BOOKS.

On general subjects, these are determined by the University standards. Religious instruction is given from the Bible. In the Madras Christian College, and I believe elsewhere, the rule is to

* At Nagpore the C. V. E. S. Readers are used. The same remark applies to some other Free Church Schools.

devote the first hour to this subject. I was present one morning when Dr. Miller gave a Bible lesson, and was much pleased with the attention of the class.

The Madras Christian College students say in their memorial, "We have never objected to the teaching of the Bible." They will also allow a certain amount of exposition; but, as has been remarked, "The greatest nicety of judgment and delicacy of perception are necessary in deciding the limit to which such instruction may be carried, without 'wounding their religious feeling.'" You may say as much as you please to a Hindu in favour of Christianity, provided you do not *pointedly* show that it condemns his own conduct.

It is a lamentable fact that there has been a great decrease in the number of baptisms for some time past. In 1872 I collected, as far as I could, the statistics of baptisms in Madras from the different Missionary Institutions for twenty years previously. They were as follows:

				Baptisms.
1852-56	...	...	...	39
1856-61	...	...	...	10
1862-66	...	...	...	5
1867-71	...	...	...	1

No professor in the Madras Free Church College has, I believe, baptized any of its students since 1862, though one was baptised by the Rev. P. Rajahgopal about two years after he left the College. This year about 400 students expressed their "horror and dread" at the prospect of one of their number becoming a Christian, showing their rarity and how little they were expected. Indeed they say, "we believed till now that the Professors of the College would never have anything to do with converting their students."

The statistics of baptisms for Calcutta and Bombay are not available.

The late Dr. Ballantyne, of Benares, gives the following advice to a Missionary whose labours have not yielded any visible spiritual results:

"I would not have him go on for ever in the old mill-round, grinding no grit, and yet, with a 'vicious contentedness,' resignedly accepting that result. I would not have him distil illicit comfort from the text in which St. Paul says, 'I planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase'; as if here *man's* part had been done, and the responsibility for the 'no increase' must now rest elsewhere, if anywhere. I would have him reflect candidly whether he has not neglected some comparatively humble yet not unimportant thing. If planting and watering have not sufficed to make the tree bear fruit, might he not bethink himself of setting to work (not without scriptural warrant too) to dig about it and to dung it? But what if he has planted only, and not

watered? Or—to put a more home question—what if peradventure he has been watering away where there was no plant?”*

It may be asked, what is suggested in addition to daily Bible instruction?

The mind of the Hindu is peculiar. The late Mr. Lacroix, of Calcutta, a missionary of great experience, says:

“A proper Hindu will admit fully and in the most unqualified terms that Christianity is true, and that it is an admirable system, and you may go away under the impression that you have convinced him and that he is in a very hopeful state. But no such thing. You have never touched his belief that Hinduism is also true; and if it be not quite so good, that is just because you are more fortunate than he, just as you have got a white face, and he a black one.”†

This is corroborated by Dr. Mullens in his life of Lacroix:

“Hindus are prepared to receive both sides of a contradiction as true; and especially to accept only that side of a question which is the most comfortable, and best promotes that quietism which in their eyes is the chief end of man's existence. Nothing but a full exposure of evil, together with a clear statement of its antagonistic truth, will suffice to awaken so perverted an intellect, or lead forward to a martyr's devotedness so corrupted a heart.” p. 159.

In consequence of this, the early Missionaries gave considerable attention to the Evidences of Christianity and showing its incompatibility with Hinduism. Dr. Mackay took part in the preparation of a treatise published by the Calcutta Tract Society, which was reprinted at Madras. Dr. Wilson wrote two powerful Exposures of Hinduism. The *Letters to Indian Youth*, by Dr. Murray Mitchell, are well-known.

In an account, some years ago, of the Calcutta Church Mission College, it is said; “Besides the Bible, some standard work on the Christian Evidences is read in every class, and this, often more even than the Bible lecture, is found to provoke discussion and elicit inquiry.”

I confess that I do not know precisely how far instruction in the Evidences is given at present in all the Colleges; but I have some reason to fear that the pressure of University subjects is such that in some cases it does not receive the attention it did before. This I think is one of the causes, though not the most important, why there are fewer baptisms than in former times.

It would require a good deal of careful consideration to draw up a scheme of text-books to be studied during each year of the College Course. This is a matter which might well be discussed at a meeting of the Free Church Missionaries in India connected with all the Colleges.

* *Bible for the Pandits*, p. xvi.

† *Bengal Conference Report*, p. 64.

Dr. Murray Mitchell's work is intended for young readers. It goes over the whole ground, although, of course, in an elementary manner. He is now revising it for the tenth edition. It is written in a kindly spirit, and seems well adapted for the Matriculation Class.

There is at present a kind of Hindu revival. The most extravagant eulogies are heaped upon the national creed. It is gravely asserted that "in respect of the purity and practical character of its spiritual truths, the Hindu religion is inferior to no other religion in the world."

It seems to me that Dr. Murray Mitchell might prepare a sequel to his "Letters" for the College First Year's Students, explaining what Hinduism really is, especially Vedic Hinduism, regarding which there is the grossest ignorance.

Students, more enlightened, are rather inclined to join some branch of the Brahma Samaj. A text-book showing the insufficiency of mere theism and contrasting it with Christianity, might form the Second Year's Course.

From the absence of the historical faculty, some branches of Christian evidence carry no weight with the Hindus. The moral argument, the adaptation of Christianity to the wants of man, should be mainly employed. What Christianity has already accomplished should be dwelt upon. *Gesta Christi*, though admirable, is too large. There is an excellent little book published by the S. P. C. K.—Croslegh's *Fruits of Christianity*. But there should be adaptation to India, showing that the "horror and dread" of the Madras students should rather have been a feeling of joy. This might form the Third Year's Course.

The Senior College Class might study selections from Butler's *Analogy*, and be made acquainted with modern religious thought, so as withstand the agnostic ideas which will meet them in the literature of the day.

The foregoing are only crude ideas; but a series of the kind, drawn up with care and judgment, is very desirable. The Free Church Colleges could scarcely confer a greater boon on educated Hindus than by its preparation. It would be useful to the thousands who have passed through Colleges as well as to those who are now students.

Probable Objection.—It is proposed that the above series of text-books should have two hours a week in each college class in addition to the Bible instruction. This, I believe, was the course in former days. It may be urged that already both students and professors are overworked. Then give less time to secular branches.

Dr. Miller justly remarked that the Madras Christian College is too large. The second class has 220 students; even the Senior

B. A. class has 160. Stronger personal influence would be exerted upon smaller numbers. It was this, more even than their addresses, which made Missionaries instrumental in gaining converts in former times.

It is very desirable that Missionary Professors should not be so entirely absorbed by University subjects as to be unable to take part in evangelistic labours among educated Hindus. They should also have more time for study, and to watch the current of native thought. At present this is almost impossible.

Suggestions.—These may be summed up as follows :

1. Throughout the School Department, Christian Readers, specially prepared for Missionary Schools in India, should be substituted for Scottish "Readers."

2. Dr. Murray Mitchell's *Letters to Indian Youth on the Evidences of Christianity*, should form a text-book in all the Matriculation classes.

3. A series of four graduated Text-Books on the Evidences and Doctrines of Christianity, contrasting them with Hinduism, simple Theism, &c., should be carefully prepared and studied in all the College Classes.

One great advantage of the above course is that every student would be reached. At present lectures are given in the Evangelistic Hall, near the Madras Christian College, by different missionaries; but only a mere handful of the students attend.

Every Mission School and College in India should act upon the same plan where it is not already adopted.

Concluding Remarks.—While advocating the use of Christian Readers in Schools, and works on the evidences in Colleges, it is fully recognized that the best devised machinery will profit little without influence from on high. Long experience shows the truth of the words, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Still, the Spirit usually works by means.

By the use of home books, the Free Church, *so far as English "Readers" are concerned*, virtually shields the pupils in its schools from nearly every reference to the Saviour, and from every appeal that would touch their consciences as Hindus. Nor do they read a single word about the degraded condition of Indian women or the wrongs of widows. The national pride, now so common, is thus fostered.

The Rev. W. Stevenson describes as follows the ideas of some Indian social reformers :

"The evil customs and practices pervade the whole society of which they form a part, and they do not profess to be exempt from them. But they want to have them reformed,—only they must have every body reformed all at once, the whole society ought to make one simultaneous

movement, and at one grand moment throw off the yoke together. So they must wait till every one is ready, none must make any step before all the rest; the whole community must as one body achieve the reform."

Some Missionaries may be inclined to adopt the same principle in religious reform; but an old issue of the *Free Church Record* takes the view which will be held by others:

"It is true that very great value belongs to that process of elevating the Native mind which is unquestionably going on, and which is destined, we have no doubt to issue in a great national movement for the abandonment of Hinduism, if not for the acceptance of the Gospel of Christ. But even with a view to this elevation, we are persuaded that individual conversions are the most important of all contributions to it, and are the surest indications of its progress."

A missionary who does not earnestly look for baptisms is not likely to have any. The prophet says, "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

As stated at the heading, this Letter is exclusively for "Private Circulation." It is intended primarily for Professor Lindsay. Copies will be sent to Missionaries of the Free Church in India, that they may be prepared to consider its proposals, if brought before them. Some other Missionaries and Members of Missionary Committees will receive copies, but it is not desirable that it should go beyond them.

Apologising for the liberty I have taken,

With Christian regards,

Yours faithfully,

J. MURDOCH.

MADRAS, August 29th, 1888.



